

In The Claims:

The following claim listing sets forth the present version of the claims after amendment, and supercedes any previous claims listing.

1. (Currently Amended) An image management system, comprising:  
an image acquisition device for acquiring diagnostic images;  
a computer coupled to the image acquisition device, the computer including logic for receiving a diagnostic image from the image acquisition device; and  
a memory element associated with the computer, where the memory element stores a plurality of electronic signature files;  
wherein the computer includes logic for associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.
2. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of electronic signature files corresponds to a signature of a user of the image management system.
3. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, further comprising a client application associated with the computer that comprises a set of computer-readable instructions, where the client application instructs the computer to associate one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.
4. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, wherein the client application further comprises:  
a user interface configured to present to the user of the image management system a plurality of choices from which the user identifies him or her as the user of the image management system, and so that the electronic signature file associated with the diagnostic image corresponds to the user of the image management system.
5. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, wherein where the image acquisition device is an ultrasound diagnostic device.
6. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, where the client application defines the association of the electronic signature file ~~is associated~~

with the diagnostic image only after the entry of a password.

7. (Currently Amended) The image management system of claim 1, further comprising:

a network configured to couple the image acquisition device to the computer;  
and

a network interface associated with the image acquisition device, and the computer, wherein the network interface is configured to electronically transfer the diagnostic image over the network.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for applying an electronic signature to a report associated with an image file, the method comprising the steps of:

acquiring a diagnostic image using an image acquisition device;

forwarding the diagnostic image to a computer;

providing the report associated with the image file to the computer;

storing a plurality of electronic signature files in a memory associated with a computer; and

associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the report and/or diagnostic image.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein each of the plurality of electronic signature files corresponds to a signature of a user ~~of~~ with permission to use the computer.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of using a client application to instruct the computer to associate one of the plurality of electronic signature files of a user with permission to use the computer with the diagnostic image.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of presenting to a user of the image management system a plurality of choices from which the user identifies him or herself as the user of the image management system,

wherein so that the electronic signature file associated with the diagnostic image corresponds to the user of the image management system.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, where the image acquisition device is an ultrasound diagnostic imaging device.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of requiring a password before ~~prior to~~ associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:  
coupling the image acquisition device to the computer system over a network;  
and  
electronically transferring the diagnostic image over the network to the computer system.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having a program comprising a set of computer readable instructions for implementation by a computer system in order to apply for applying an electronic signature to a report associated with an image file, the program comprising logic for performing the steps of:  
receiving a diagnostic image from an image acquisition device;  
forwarding the diagnostic image to a computer system coupled to the device;  
storing a plurality of electronic signature files in a memory associated with a computer system; and  
associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the report and/or diagnostic image.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of electronic signature files corresponds to a signature of a user of the image management system.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 16, wherein the set of computer readable instructions further comprise~~comprising~~ logic for allowing a client application to instruct the computer system to associate one of

the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 17, wherein the set of computer readable instructions further comprises~~comprising~~ logic for presenting to a user of the image management system a plurality of choices from which the user identifies him or herself as the user of the image management system, so that the electronic signature file associated with the diagnostic image corresponds to the user of the image management system.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 18, where the image acquisition device is an ultrasound diagnostic device.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 19, further comprising logic for requiring a password prior to associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium program of claim 15, further comprising logic for:

coupling the image acquisition device to the computer system over a network;

and

electronically transferring the diagnostic image over the network.